

at the Harrison District police station. It is basically ground zero for gun violence in the city of Chicago. They demonstrated to us the brandnew technology, the amazing technology, the video cameras, the shotspotters, new technology which they are using every single day to thwart the criminals and to prove their cases when necessary. These communities and these officers are keeping us as safe as they can, but they are up against an avalanche of guns.

The grim toll of gun violence in Chicago continues to climb upward. The officers agreed with Attorney General Garland and myself, a major problem is that we have guns being illegally sold to people who never should have had them, who never would have passed a background check, convicted felons or those who are mentally unstable. This issue is more important and more significant than any single jurisdiction. It is nationwide.

Roughly, 60 percent of the guns recovered at crime scenes in Chicago originate from out of State, primarily from Indiana, but also from other States. A person can easily buy a gun from an unlicensed seller in Indiana and drive it to Chicago in a matter of minutes that very same day to resell that gun on the streets.

Why don't we do something about this? If those who own guns agree with everyone else that we ought to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people, why can't this Congress do that simple thing to try to slow down this gun violence?

There is one more truth we must acknowledge: Gun violence isn't just about access to weapons. Too many kids in cities like Chicago face daily trauma that is making them more likely to fall into the cycle of violence.

During the Attorney General's visit to Chicago, we joined community leaders at St. Agatha Catholic Church in the Lawndale section of the city. They have developed a successful violence intervention program called READI Chicago. It is one of the many community violence intervention programs that has received financial support from this President.

While meeting with the leaders of READI Chicago, I spoke with a young man whom I will call John. He is remarkably brave. After learning his story, one cannot ignore the similarities he shares with so many other young people in the city.

He grew up in a struggling family. He sold drugs to earn money. Like many of his peers, he ended up carrying a gun and got involved with gang violence. He was arrested, convicted, and served time in prison. Then he came back to the community and wanted to start a different life. That is how he got involved with READI Chicago, where he is now a positive force for change in his home city.

It is an inspiring story, but that young man John, in his early twenties, still remains at risk. He fears that his

advocacy on behalf of this program has put crosshairs on his back in the neighborhood and that his family may even be targeted as well. Every street corner in his neighborhood, every street he crosses, comes with a risk. He has to look around constantly to see if the gang members are going to target him. But still, even under this unimaginable stress, John is looking for a new path in his life. I asked him what he wanted to do. He said he would like to apply to attend Chicago State University, which is near this area. I hope he can get there. And I hope he will be a success, but it is amazing that he still has that dream after all that he has seen.

For young people in Chicago like him, there is no quick fix. If you grew up in a family without stability and security at home, in school, or in a neighborhood, which many of us take for granted every day, it can harm your development and change the way you see the world. The CDC's landmark study on ACEs, adverse childhood experiences, tells us that exposure to trauma is linked to risk of drug use, suicide, academic struggle, and many other problems. If you are a young child experiencing this chaos, if you watch a family member get shot or violently assaulted, it leaves a scar called trauma. Trauma can stay with a child for life.

That is why violence intervention programs like READI Chicago are so important, connecting these at-risk youth with cognitive behavioral therapy, paid transitional jobs, wraparound support services, resources that support the healthy development of children who are struggling with trauma. These are the resources that will change a young person's life and set him on a better path, a path where he can discover a passionate calling and, ultimately, get back to the community.

We must invest in these long-term solutions to break cycles of violence and trauma. The bipartisan RISE from Trauma Act that I have introduced with Senator CAPITO, a Republican from West Virginia, and many colleagues, is an important step in that direction. It would provide \$5 billion that President Biden has called for in his Build Back Better agenda for community violence intervention.

We in the Senate need to take immediate steps to combat violent crime. Can't we just get together and agree that we don't want to sell firearms to people who are convicted felons? It seems so obvious, and there is such public support for it. I want my colleagues to understand that the problem of gun violence isn't confined to the city of Chicago. We have cities that are much smaller downstate that are seeing an increase in gun violence as well. It is time for us to do something about it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

MIKE ENZI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this weekend, we received the bad news that our friend and former colleague, Mike Enzi, was involved in a serious accident while riding his bicycle.

Mike's colleagues on both sides of the aisle were sorry enough to see him depart the Chamber and begin his well-earned next chapter just a few months ago. Mike and Diana were a fantastic Senate couple in every respect, from major legislative accomplishments to the generosity and kindness they showed to everyone from Senate staff to the pages. So I know Members on both sides of the aisle are very much thinking of Mike at this time. We pray for his health and for the entire Enzi family.

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

Now, Madam President, on an entirely different matter, American families are anxious, and they are uneasy.

The share of Americans who feels optimistic about our country's direction has plummeted by almost 20 percent just since the springtime. As recently as early May, nearly two-thirds of Americans said they were optimistic about the direction of the country. That was the highest figure that survey had reported in 14 years, but, alas, that has plummeted. Late last week, a new survey found that optimism is now a minority position as 55 percent of Americans are pessimistic. Approval of the new administration's handling of COVID-19 has tumbled. Their handling of the economy is underwater among Independents. Fewer than 4 in 10 Americans approve of their handling of immigration, the border, or violent crime.

Unfortunately, American families have ample reason to feel this way. The end of June clocked the highest annual inflation spike in more than a decade. The Democrats' stay-home bonus to workers who remain unemployed has slowed the recovery and helped to keep workforce participation stagnant. Meanwhile, last year, as the far left put the squeeze on law enforcement funding in cities across the country, America faced a 25-percent—25-percent—increase in homicides. Then, after the Biden administration was very eager to claim ownership and spike the football on the vaccination trajectory, which they largely inherited from Republican leadership, we have now seen vaccination rates in many places plateau on what this White House has been insisting is their watch.

This turn toward pessimism is especially stunning and especially sad because President Biden took office with